From: Judith Phillips
To: City Council
Subject: BDS Resolution
Date: Wednesday, April 18, 2018 4:37:05 PM

Dear members of the Cambridge City Council:

I wanted to write to thank you for all of the ways that you make me incredibly proud to be a Cantabrigian. From the big initiatives, like the Community Electricity Program, citywide composting and participatory budgeting, to the smaller ones, like rainbow crosswalks on Mass Ave. for Pride Day. I have been struck on many occasions by how responsive you are to citizens of Cambridge who surface questions or concerns to you.

I hope that today is no exception. For the first time, I do not feel proud to be a Cantabrigian. I feel singled out, villainized, victimized and profoundly disappointed. I cannot address the specifics of a resolution that has not yet been made available for review. As a general matter, however, the resolution against HP and the BDS movement strike me as everything that I thought Cambridge was not. They stifle free and honest debate, single out a minority group for reproach, and do nothing to move the needle on a very complicated problem.

Even if you agree with the sentiment behind the BDS movement, where does it stop? 3M creates devices that are used in prisons in Israel. Will the Cambridge public schools be prohibited from buying Scotch tape? Should they be? Waze was founded in Israel. Should you pass a resolution to encourage Cantabrigians to stop using it for navigation? What about Google, which bought Waze and has an R&D center in Israel? We couldn't even use Bing as an alternative, since Microsoft has an R&D center there as well. Should we avoid generic drugs so as not to contribute to the bottom line of Teva Pharmaceuticals?

Even if you agree with the sentiment behind the BDS movement, will this resolution achieve your objectives? Israel takes the actions that it does to provide for the security of its citizens. Do you think that singling it out for reproach, and seeking to isolate it, will cause it to feel more secure or less secure? If the latter, do you think that you'll be furthering your aims by passing this resolution?

This resolution comes on the heels of Holocaust Remembrance Day. It comes on the heels of a scary survey in which 31% of respondents aged 18 to 34 responded that only 2 million Jews perished in the Holocaust (https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/1.5994426). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an incredibly complex and nuanced problem. Anti-Semitism is a hard and entrenched problem as well. BDS is blunt and entirely unnuanced. Please do not try to address such a complex situation with such a blunt, ill thought-out measure. Please do not give fodder to those who fan the flames or anti-Semitism.

I thank those of you have indicated that you will vote against this misguided and shortsighted resolution. I urge those of you who are considering support for it to reconsider.

Kindest regards,

Judith Dolgin

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